

AM Romans 8:18-32 God's guarantee for Good

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 20 February 2022

Preacher: Mr Allan Thomson

[0 : 00] If you have your Bibles with you, to turn with me to the book of Romans, Romans and chapter 8, Paul's letter to the church at Rome and chapter 8.

And we're going to commence our reading at verse 18, Romans 8, verse 18, down to verse 32. And we're cutting in right in the middle of a letter that Paul is writing to a church at Rome that is going through a lot of trouble and hardship and suffering.

And we're going to look today specifically at verse 28, but to get the connection, we're going to commence our reading at verse 18. So the Apostle Paul is writing and he says these words.

I consider that our present sufferings are not worthy comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of one who subjected it in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

[1 : 25] We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.

For in this hope we are saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have?

But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness.

We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

And here's the verse we want to think about. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

[2 : 54] For those God foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

And those he predestined, he also called. And those he called, he also justified. And those he justified, he also glorified.

What then shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

Amen. And may God give us good understanding of his written words. Now before we come to look at, now can you turn back to the word of God that we read a moment ago, to Romans chapter 8.

[3 : 59] As we come to God's word, just let's bow our heads and ask his blessing as we come together. Let's pray. Father, in the words of the hymn writer we say, We speak, O Lord, as we come to you to receive from you your holy word.

Father, we ask that you might give us ears to hear your word. That we might not stop our ears from hearing what you have to say to us.

That we might take it to ourselves personally. That we might be encouraged, those of us who are believers. And for those who do not know you, we pray that you might come by your Holy Spirit and speak to them this morning.

And bring them to faith in your Son, the Lord Jesus. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. I've entitled, as you'll see from your bulletin sheet this morning, the sermon, God's Guarantee for Good.

If you're like me, we all like guarantees. Guarantees for goods that we buy. Something that we can rely on when things go wrong.

[5 : 29] The verse I want us to look at this morning, as I've already said, is this verse 28. It's a well-known verse for many of us. Perhaps a favourite verse of yours.

The problem is that we're diving headlong into a verse. Halfway through a chapter. And halfway through a book.

It's always dangerous if you do that. But I would like us this morning to understand just one of these great truths. That are contained in this verse, in verse 28. That will help us.

And hopefully encourage us as Christians. It's a guarantee from God that we can rely on 100%. And unlike other guarantees that you might have for goods that you have brought, this guarantee doesn't run out. It is for eternity.

[6 : 32] Now Paul is writing to the church at Rome. If you were to go back to chapter 1 and verse 7, we would see that to those, Paul writes in chapter 1 and verse 7.

He says, To those in Rome who are loved of God and called to be saints. They are the addressees. They are the ones to whom Paul is writing this epistle, this letter.

When posts or letters arrive at my house, we have to be careful who opens what. R. Thompson could be any one of three people.

Ruth, Rebecca and Rachel are the ladies in that house in my life. And I dare not open any of those letters. As they're not for me.

They're not addressed to me. But Paul's letter and our verse here that we've looked at in verse 28, are specifically addressed to specific people.

[7 : 43] And we shall see that. There's no doubt as to who Paul is writing to. Let's read that verse again. And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good.

For those who are called according to God's purpose. So the addressees who are named on the guarantee, as it were, are those who love God, and those who are called according to God's purpose.

In other words, these words that we're looking at this morning in this verse, are not for everybody. We need to be clear about that. Whatever this verse tells us, the truth, the promise contained in it, the guarantee that it is, don't apply to all and sundry.

Now verse 28, since we're diving in, is a general statement of the Apostle Paul. It's a general promise that he's making about this group of people.

And in verse 29 and following, he elaborates and he unfolds and he unwraps that general statement that we're going to look at this morning.

[9 : 12] But we have to be very careful that we don't go claiming this guarantee or rely on this promise if it's not addressed to you this morning.

Well, let's look at the assertion or the guarantee that Paul makes. All things work together for good to those who love God, who are the called according to his purpose.

Or as another translation puts it, and we know to the ones loving God, all things work together for the good.

So this verse is for you this morning if you're someone who loves God. It's a marvellous verse that brings to Christians a great guarantee that they can rely on throughout their life.

A great assurance. Something that you can hold on to today and tomorrow and throughout 2022 and the rest of your life if you're a Christian.

[10 : 24] It's a verse that brings stability and certainty into our lives. Now none of us really like uncertainty, do we?

We like to know what is happening or what is going to happen in our lives. Change and uncertainty and the unknown are unnerving for us.

We don't like it. Change and uncertainty often bring fear and paralysis and foreboding and foreboding into our lives and into our spirits.

Because we live in an uncertain world. None of us know what a new day will bring forth. None of us know what the rest of this year will pan out like.

Will it be a good year? An easy year? Will it be plain sailing? Or will it be a bad year? A difficult year?

[11 : 36] A year of trials? A year of trouble? A year of bad news? Not one of us knows what lies ahead or what will take place or what will come into our lives.

But amidst all of that uncertainty uncertainty and the uncertainties of life the Apostle Paul tells us here one thing is absolutely sure one thing is absolutely guaranteed and here's the guarantee that God is working everything for your good.

The Apostle Paul says we know he's telling these Roman Christians in their problems and struggles that you might not know what to pray for.

He says that just further up the passage he says we don't know what to pray for in our predicament and in our troubles and if you're anything like I am that is my experience too.

Things come into our lives and we don't know what to pray for. And the Apostle Paul is saying to this church at Rome you might not know what to pray for but here's one thing that you do know and we know.

[12 : 56] A good friend of mine has said don't let what you don't know get in the way of what you do know.

Now notice that the Apostle Paul isn't simply making a factual claim here for example he doesn't just say all things work together for your good.

He's making a knowledge claim he says we know we know that all things work together for their good.

Which raises the question how do we know? How do we know that all things are working for our good?

What guarantee can we possibly have that despite all the appearances of things in our life all things that will conspire that all things will conspire for the Christian's good?

[13 : 54] Well he gives us the answer in verse 29 if you look forward because in verse 29 that chapter or that verse begins with the word for and he says we know that all things work together for the good for this very reason.

Verse 29 is providing an argument for how we know verse 28 is true and here's the argument in a nutshell we don't have time to go into it completely we know that all things will work together for the good of the called because if you're called by God that means you were first foreknown by God and predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ and it means that you're now justified and will eventually be glorified and taken right into God's presence at the end of your life or when Christ comes.

There are those five links in verse 29 called for known predestined justified and glorified five links in the chain of salvation and there are no weakest links in God's chain of salvation that's how we know because there are no breaks in God's chain of salvation the apostle Paul reminds the Philippians the church at Philippi later on in the New Testament of that very thing listen to what he says in Philippians 1 verse 6 he says being confident of this he says that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ

Jesus I don't know if you watched the program I was watching it last night actually mastermind and you remember the famous expression that Magnus Magnusson coined I've started so I'll finish well God was there saying that long long before Magnus Magnusson was saying that I've started in your life a work of salvation Christian and I'm going to complete that work of salvation well who let's look at who the address are again it's those who love God that's what the apostle Paul says he doesn't say and we know that all things work together for the good to those who believe in God he says we know that all things work together for the good to those who love

God and who are the called according to his purpose it's to those who love God now that's in distinction if we were to read the opening seven or eight chapters of the book of Romans we would find that there's another group of people who hate God who are opposed to God who clench their fist to God and who say we do not want God to live over us and we will not obey God and the apostle Paul is clear in the opening chapters of this letter that he tells us that those are people who hate God you see the world is not apathetic to God it's not neutral towards God it's not only that the vast majority of people do not believe it's that the vast majority of people in our society and in the world hate

[18 : 05] God when you begin to speak to them about humbling themselves before God and that God is a holy God and he demands absolute righteousness from them they don't like that they hate God they hated his son Jesus Christ when he was here on earth and they continue to hate God with a clenched fist but the Christian the apostle Paul says here is someone who loves God the Christian is someone who goes beyond believing in God acknowledging God's presence or existence you know it's possible that you can believe in God and still not be a Christian the apostle

James tells us that the devils believe in the name of God they know who he is they're orthodox in their theology if you might add and they tremble in his presence but they're not believers or they're not

Christians so it's possible to believe in God but not be a Christian James says the devils believe and tremble no you see to love God means as we've been thinking in the commandments over the last couple of times that I've been here to believe in God to love God means to be obedient to God to be obedient to his commandments John in his gospel says these words marvelous words in John 14 and verse 21 he says he that hath my commandments and does them he it is who loves me he that has my commandments and does them is obedient to them bows her knee and her will to God and does them he it is who loves me

I wonder if you this morning have a desire in your heart to please God to love him to obey him to have his smile upon your life the apostle designates these people who have this guarantee as those who love God but he also calls them later on in the verse the called according to God's purpose the called is another term for those who love God another term for believers those who have heard God's voice in their lives in their hearts they have heard God speaking to them and they've put their faith and their trust and their hope in

Christ back again to John's gospel in chapter 10 the Lord Jesus says these words he says my sheep hear my voice they are the called my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me and I give unto them eternal life now that's a verse quite often that's misquoted because you might hear people saying my sheep hear my voice and I know them and I give unto them eternal life that's not what the verse says the verse says my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me and I give unto them eternal life he gives eternal life to those believers who are following him trusting him and loving him he gives them eternal life so those are the addresses and I have to ask you the question this morning are you amongst those who love God who are following him who are obeying him but then look at the guarantee the assertion that Paul makes he says and we know to the ones loving God all things work together for the good you know it's not only one of the most remarkable statements in the whole of the Bible it is one of the most comforting statements if you're a believer that we can hold on to in our lives if you're one of those people do you know that as a Christian God is overruling everything in the world in the cosmos for your good it's an amazing statement it's an amazing guarantee you see and if you know that then there really is no reason for you or

[23 : 47] I to be down cast or depressed in this world it's good and it's essential I put to you to remind ourselves in the difficulties of life and life is very difficult sometimes that God is for us and Paul will go on to say that in the verses following on that God loves us his believers those who love him so much that nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus but the apostle Paul says all things all things work together surely not not all things yes I understand the good things

God is working in my life but does that include the bad things well Paul says all things the good things the bad things the trials the tribulations the disappointments the distresses the persecutions the sufferings the dangers that we come in to contact with the failures in our lives he says all things are working together now note carefully some of those things aren't good in themselves that's not what he's saying in and of themselves some of these things are bad things so how can we say that they work together for our good well the answer is that all of these things bad and good are used by God allowed by God and even sent by God into our lives to work for our spiritual well being the answer is that all of these things are used by God they're so over ruled by God in his sovereignty that they turn out God is able to turn all of these things out for our good they are all necessary in God's purpose and will he says according to God's will he says in verse 28 to make us the whole purpose of all of these things working in our life is to make us like Christ so that we might be conformed to his image that is

God's great master plan not just to save you not just to forgive you but to make you like his son the Lord Jesus and he does that through all the events even the bad events that come into our lives we see that in many characters of the Bible don't we I just want to bring two of them to you we think of that in the life of Joseph back in the book of Genesis what a roller coaster of a life Joseph had you remember back in Genesis chapter 39 perhaps you're conversant with it Joseph was Jacob's favourite son he got a coat of many colours or a coat of long sleeves and because he was Jacob's favourite son his other ten brothers hated him wanted to kill him they settled for throwing him down

a well and then they sold him off into slavery in

Egypt at the age of 17 but as you read through the book of Genesis and the life story of Joseph and we obviously don't have time to do that this morning the recurring theme that comes through are these words the Lord was with him the Lord was with him and because the Lord was with him what happened in Joseph's life was that he rose up through the ranks in Potiphar's house but unfortunately in Potiphar's house Potiphar's wife took a liking to him falsely accused him of raping her he was wrongly imprisoned he was forgotten he was let down by his cell mates the baker and the butler it was a life of disappointment and ups and downs and he languished there for a number of years in prison forgotten looked over can you imagine the questions that went through

[29 : 20] Joseph's mind as he was there in Egypt in the cell why me I don't deserve this why all this horror in my life what are you doing God why am I not getting out of here have I not been faithful to you this is so unjust why all this trouble in my life this is terrible and then more years of downs than ups in his life before he is ultimately exalted to be second in command to Pharaoh and he predicts a famine in the land and his family ultimately come down to Egypt his brothers who had sold him off who thought he was dead who thought he had got rid of him they all come and they receive food in the time of famine and

Jacob his father is in turmoil and he says all these things Jacob says all these things are against me and maybe you've felt like that this morning that all these things are against you but eventually all of Joseph's family his father and his brothers come down to Egypt and Joseph discloses himself for who he is and the family are reunited after 27 years and Joseph surveys all his life and I know this has been a rather potted history of Joseph's life but read it in Genesis 39 this afternoon but Joseph then looks back across all his lives and he says these marvelous words in Genesis chapter 45 in verse 7 he says God did send me before you to preserve life and to save your lives by a great deliverance as for you he says you meant evil against me but

God meant it for good isn't that an amazing assessment as he looked over his life as he looked at his circumstances he says you all meant it against me but he says God was working it for my good and for your good to bring it about that many people should be kept alive as they are today you see God allowed all of those bad things to happen God sent but God was working all for Joseph's good all the hardships of Joseph's life the unfairness the injustice in prison the dashed hopes the trials the troubles they were all necessary in God's plan for Joseph and the whole of

Israel and throughout the Old Testament God's people often as we say in Glasgow go under the cosh sometimes for their own sins that they might be brought to their senses by God at other times God directly sends trials and testings into their lives to prove them to test them to make them more God like to make them more Christ like to improve them it's a refining process that God is going through in believers lives so often to make us more like his son the Lord Jesus you know I close with the other illustration of this in the

Old Testament time's gone he did the same thing with Job didn't he for those of you who know your Bibles Job was a righteous man a godly man a wealthy man he had everything going for him he loved God there was none like him but God began to test Job's faith he began to turn the heat up on him he started to refine Job in the crucible of adversity and trouble and loss in his life Job lost his livelihood he lost his family he lost his health and his wealth and God allowed all of those things in fact God allowed Satan to bring all of that trouble into his life and

[34 : 40] Job's wife turned to Job on one day and said curse God and die in other words spit in God's face Job's wife told Job to do and what was Job's response Job could have been bitter he could have moaned against God and about all the troubles and all the loss losing his family but Job's response was godly he simply accepted that God had the right to do with him what he wanted and he said these words the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away blessed be the name of the Lord he enjoyed the good and he incurred the bad and in not one of these situations did he curse

God and one of the tests of our love for our God this morning is how we react when we're tested how we react when these troubles come into our life when bad things happen in our experience when everything is going against you when you're going through the ringer when you have the props taken away out of your life and when you're in a dark place when you're at your wits end how do you respond to God do you curse God do you moan do you rail against him or do you say with Job the godly Job though he slay me yet will I trust him because he's the one who knows best God brings these difficulties into our life to purify us his ultimate goal is not just to forgive us or to justify us but to conform us to the image of his son that's

God's ultimate purpose he's the master weaver to change the metaphor Job and Joseph and the apostle Paul were much better people at the end of their trials than they were at the start perhaps you know that poem the master weaver or life is but a weaving let me close by just reading it to you my life is but a weaving between my God and me I cannot choose the colours he weaveth steadily of times he weaveth sorrow and I in foolish pride forget he sees the upper and I the underside not till the loom is silent and the shuttles cease to fly will

God unroll the canvas and reveal the reason why the dark threads are as needful in the weaver's skilful hand as the threads of gold and silver in the pattern he has planned he knows he loves he cares nothing this truth can dim he gives the very best to those who leave the choice to him who knows what tomorrow will bring forth who knows what this afternoon will bring into your life but if you're a believer here you have this guarantee in Romans 8 and 28 that God works all things together for your good to those who love God who are the called according to his purpose may God help us to trust that for his name sake let's pray together our father we thank you for this wonderful promise that we have in your word that you're working everything together for your people's good for those who love you who are the called according to your purpose we thank you that no matter what comes into our life we can hold on to this truth and this guarantee that you are for us and you're creating us into the image of your son the Lord Jesus help us not to grumble and to groan but to bow beneath your hand and father for those who are here this morning who do not know you who do not love you we pray that they'll come to know you through your son the Lord Jesus father we ask these things just now in

[40 : 21] Jesus name amen I said ■ what I do